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ABSTRACT

Leaders in the fields of child mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and special education face the challenge of incorporating managed care practices into their service delivery systems. This manual discusses the introduction of managed care practices in these fields and is intended to assist staff of agencies to become familiar with managed care principles and how these principles will impact their work. Following a glossary of terms associated with managed care, outcome assessment, and each service system, Chapter 1 of the manual introduces six key areas defining an agency's ability to provide quality services in a managed care environment: (1) administrative capacity; (2) organizational history and leadership; (3) client and constituency responsiveness; (4) service capacity; (5) performance standards; and (6) outcome assessment. Chapters 2, 4, 6, and 8 present the social forces that led to the introduction of managed care practices in mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and special education, respectively. Chapters 3, 5, 7, and 9 evaluate the readiness of each field in each of the six areas to adapt to managed care practices effectively; these chapters also suggest some approaches to effectively implement specific practices and provide some cautions to consider when implementing services. Chapter 10 discusses how collaboration can improve communities for children, describes the current state of contracting between managed care organizations and state and community agencies, and some problems with cost-saving efforts in children's services. Appendices provide sample outcome questionnaires, present a suggested minimal data set for child welfare agencies, and provide suggested client rights statements. (Author)

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